

We had been warned in Luanfu to be very careful, for there was a band of 35 to 40 robbers on the road; well, of course, we carried our firearms all of the time, but luckily we had no encounter and all we saw was a human head hanging in a little wooden cage, hanging in a wild apricot tree along the roadside and grinning at us with its white teeth, showing partly through the dried-up blackened skin. Beneath the cage there dangled a wooden tablet with the man's name on it, as a warning to other evil-minded mortals.

The whole thing didn't impress us much, for we were passing through a wild and lonely landscape; rugged mountains everywhere and wild apricot trees in full fruit and the five soldiers we had with us a convoy over the bad place and we ourselves also, we would have liked to see some robbers come up and test our strength. As nobody came however, we turned to the wild apricots, but they were not good enough to satisfy our tastes or quench our thirst.

As you may imagine the stopping places we halted or spent the night at were often the "limit". And oh, those fleas by night and the flies by day! Really, I cannot find any good uses for both these pests in the curriculum of our earth. We also had great difficulty in obtaining sufficient nourishing food. As you know, in summer the Chinese eat exceedingly little meat, and the main food is noodles, from wheaten flour and bird's seed; well a white man cannot derive sufficient strength from such a diet and one does not wish to deplete one's supply of canned goods too rapidly when on such a long trip as this.

My new interpreter and the new coolie are holding out fairly well. The interpreter is by far not as clever as the former one. He is more of an office man; with some training however, we may be able to transform him a bit. Yesterday morning the two were given a beating by some villagers some 10 lis from here and now we are negotiating with the local magistrate to have this beating business returned to the proper parties. I suppose we will be successful at it. So many things here in old China go differently from what they do in other lands!

Now as to my plans. Within a few days I hope to be on the road to Wen hsien and Pai hsiang chen to the South of here, then back to Chiang chou and along the Fen river to the Hoang Ho; by ferry across it and then over Tung kwang to Sianfu. From there on S. W. Shensi and to Kansu for Potanin's wild peaches.

I have collected quite a stack already of herbarium material and as time goes on this will increase many fold these coming months. If it now soon will turn cooler then everything will be all right.